

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.-2. Canceled

3. (Withdrawn - Amended) A ~~uniform coupling~~ universal coupling as claimed in Claim [[2]] 4, in which the second passage is at least one radially extending groove that is formed in the axially leading end of the cylindrical wall.

4. (Currently Amended) A universal coupling ~~as claimed in Claim 1, in which~~ comprising:

a torque transmitting unit;

first and second shafts that are connected through the torque transmitting unit;

a boot covering the torque transmitting unit and having a first end connected to the first shaft and a second end connected to the second shaft, the second end being formed into a cylindrical wall that is tightly disposed on a cylindrical portion of the second shaft and has an axially leading end;

a boot cover disposed on the cylindrical portion of the second shaft to cover the cylindrical wall leaving an annular clearance therebetween, the boot cover having an inside end surface that contacts the axially leading end of the cylindrical wall; and

an air bleeding passage that communicates the inside of the boot with the outside of the same, the air bleeding passage including a first passage that is at least one groove formed in an inner surface of the cylindrical wall and a second passage that is defined between the axially leading end of the cylindrical wall and the inside end surface of the boot cover, the second passage being provided by at least one of the axially leading end and the inside end surface,

wherein the inside end surface is formed with projections that contact the axially leading end to provide a clearance between the inside surface and the axially leading end, the clearance constituting the second passage.

5. (Currently Amended) A universal coupling as claimed in Claim [[1]] 4, in which the boot cover comprises:

a cylindrical base portion that is disposed on the cylindrical portion of the second shaft;

a cylindrical cover portion that is radially outward from an end of the cylindrical base portion to cover the cylindrical wall having the annular space kept therebetween; and

a leading lip portion that is bent radially inward from one end of the cylindrical cover portion to contact an outer surface of the boot,

wherein the inside end surface of the boot cover is formed on a stepped portion defined between the cylindrical base portion and the cylindrical cover portion.

6. (Previously Presented) A universal coupling as claimed in Claim 5, in which the cylindrical base portion is formed on its inner surface with an annular projection that is intimately put in an annular groove formed around the cylindrical portion of the second shaft.

7. (Previously Presented) A universal coupling as claimed in Claim 5, in which the leading lip portion is formed with a plurality of grooves.

8. (Currently Amended) A universal coupling as claimed in Claim [[1]] 4, in which the boot and the boot cover are each constructed of an elastic material.

9. (Currently Amended) A universal coupling as claimed in Claim [[1]] 4, in which the first shaft is adapted to connect to an output shaft of a transmission and the second shaft is adapted to connect to drive road wheels through a differential.

10. (Currently Amended) A universal coupling as claimed in Claim [[1]] 4, in which the torque transmitting unit comprises:

a tubular portion defined by the first shaft;

a plurality of balls each being rotatably disposed between an inner cylindrical surface of the tubular portion of the first shaft and the cylindrical portion of the second shaft; and

an annular cage that rotatably holds the balls.

11. Canceled

12. (Previously Presented) A universal coupling comprising:

a torque transmitting unit;

first and second shafts that are connected through the torque transmitting unit;

an elastic boot covering the torque transmitting unit and having a first end connected to the first shaft and a second end connected to the second shaft, the second end being formed into a cylindrical wall that is tightly disposed on a cylindrical portion of the second shaft and has an axially leading end;

an elastic boot cover disposed on the cylindrical portion of the second shaft to cover the cylindrical wall leaving an annular space therebetween, the boot cover having an inside end surface that contacts the axially leading end of the cylindrical wall; and

an air bleeding passage that communicates the inside of the boot with the outside of the same, the air bleeding passage including at least one axially extending groove that is formed in an inner surface of the cylindrical wall and a clearance that is defined between the axially leading end and the inside end surface, the inside end surface being formed with projections that contact the axially leading end to provide the clearance.